



LITERACY FOR LIFE

“Once you learn to read, you will be forever free.” – Frederick Douglass

SPRING 2004

Vol. 20, No.2

Blue Ridge Literacy Council Annual Meeting

- Volunteer Awards
- Election of new Board members
- Annual report presentation
- **Readings of original compositions
by BRLC Adult Learners**

Saturday, August 7, 2004 at 10:00 am
Hendersonville Library Kaplan Auditorium

Support your Literacy Council

**Mark Your Calendars!
Spread the Word!**

BRLC's 11th Annual

Golf Tournament

**Monday, June 28, 2004
11:30 AM**

Kenmure Country Club, Flat Rock

Sponsor, Play, Donate, Tell your friends!

If you need more tournament brochures
or have any questions, call the office ~ 696-3811.

New and Noteworthy in the BRLC Kitchbrary.

All materials in our library can be checked out by BRLC tutors and students

Oxford Dictionary Of Idioms For Learners Of English *In a tizzy* about how to teach idioms? This book will *knock your socks off* with its thousands of English idioms with examples and definitions for each.

From Home to School, Stories and Activities for Parents (New Readers Press) (For low beginning level and above) An engaging series of readings and follow-up activities set against the backdrop of school culture. *From Home to School* is geared to parents of school-age children and serves as an excellent supplement for any Adult Basic Education or ESL students.

The INS Interview: Will They Pass? This video provides an accurate portrayal of what the citizenship interview and test is like. It features a variety of folks taking their citizenship tests and points out why they passed (or failed). It's an excellent tool to use with your student shortly before they have to go for their test. It will greatly increase their confidence level.

CAN YOU HELP?

The Literacy Council currently has need for the following items: **Secretarial Chairs, Straight Chairs, A Slip Cover** for the “Pink Monster” – if this means nothing to you, drop by the office and look around. Thanks!

Literacy For Life

the newsletter of:

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Office Hours:

Monday thru Friday
9 AM to 5 PM

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**Henderson County
United Way**

From The Director's Desk

Several weeks ago, 10 BRLC volunteers and staffers and 7 students attended Race 4 Literacy West, the 13th Western North Carolina Literacy Conference. The highlight of the conference was, as always, the awards ceremony for the winners of the Student Writing Contest. This year, Henderson County's own Times-News sponsored the contest which is open to Literacy Council and Community College Basic Skills students from across the state.

Kathy Silverberg, General Manager of the Times-News and Nancy Nichols, Newspapers-in-Education Coordinator, presented the awards to the 10 winners, each of whom then stood and read his/her entry in front of a crowd of over 100 conference goers. For most of these adult learners, this was the first time they had ever read in public. The courage they displayed touched us all profoundly.

While I am especially proud of the four BRLC students who took first prizes in their categories (Dennis Case, Chris Edwards, Barbara Taylor and Helen Warner), all ten winners are an inspiration. Their stories ranged from a howlingly funny account of how one student met her husband to the devastatingly sad story of a Fayetteville woman's job in a morgue.

Please visit the Times-News web site and read the ten winning stories; and, tutors, I hope you will also read the stories with your students. If you have ever doubted why you volunteer in adult literacy or why you study at the council, these stories will remind you how important it is to persevere.

Thank you for the difference you make,

Diane

To access the winning articles on the Times-News web site, go to: http://www.hendersonvilleneews.com/apps/pbcs.dll/section?Category=SE_RVICES08 click on the Newspapers In Education link at the bottom left hand side of the page.

STUDY HINTS

Studying between classes really helps you learn faster, but life is so busy, it's hard to find time. Here are some tips to make homework easier to do.

- Set some time aside each day for studying. It can as little as ten minutes a day.
- Tell your family or roommates or your co-workers you are studying and ask them not to disturb you for a while.
- Make sure you have all your materials and books together and with you before you get started.
- Get comfortable and make sure you have enough light.
- Keep a notebook for your homework. You can make separate sections for spelling words, personal writing, vocabulary, grammar, etc.
- Have a list of homework to complete and check off each item as you finish it. You can make the list with your tutor during class.
- When you're done, reward yourself!

**ILP CALLS ARE COMING JULY 1
START REVIEWING NOW!**

STUDENT-TUTOR **SPOTLIGHT**

Seven years ago Mireya Chipol came from Mexico City to live in Hendersonville. As with most immigrants, Mireya spoke essentially no English. After about three and one half years Mireya's mother suggested to her that she enroll as a student with the Blue Ridge Literacy Council. She did so but, unfortunately, had to wait for an entire year before a tutor became available for her – and shortly that tutor moved away. Fortunately, Jane DeMartini was then assigned Mireya as her first, and only, student.



Mireya Chipol and Jane Demartini

Twice a week now these two friends meet at the Literacy Council office on the campus of Blue Ridge Community College. Mireya says of Jane that she is “nice” and a “good teacher” and they both say that they simply “have a good time”. Clearly, as anyone observing one of their sessions can see, they do indeed have a good time. But serious work is also done at these meetings and important learning takes place. Mireya is happy that she can now use her English at work. She enjoys being able to leave her supervisor notes. She is proud that she can help other employees by translating for them. And she teaches her colleagues who are not native English speakers a very important phrase – “Speak a little slower please.”

Jane came to be a tutor because she was on a United Way committee that evaluated the Literacy Council office. She was very impressed that such a small staff could accomplish so much; she hated that people had to wait so long for a tutor; and she could not imagine what could be more important than tutoring. She is extremely proud of Mireya, who somehow manages to make time for their twice weekly meetings even though she is a working

mother with two young children. Recently she has seen Mireya confident enough in her English to interact with the teacher of her older son, Brandon. Indeed through Mireya's help Brandon is now on the A/B Honor Role at his school.



Jose Luis and Brandon (Mireya's sons)

Together Jane and Mireya have achieved considerable success. But they are now thinking bigger thoughts. Jane urges Mireya to enroll at the community college and begin work in a CNA program. Mireya grins, chuckles, then says “One day”.

AND THE WINNERS ARE –

Below in alphabetical order are the winning essays from the Times – News Student Writing Contest that were written by BRLC students.

1. HELPING KIDS IS HELPING ME, TOO

Dennis Case (Winner)

I have been helping second graders for 4 years. I spend 6 hours at the school, 3 days a week. On Monday and Wednesday, I spend all day in one class. On Tuesday, I go into a different one.

I help kids by telling them how to spell a word (sometimes I may use a dictionary) I play with them on the playground (I'll kick the ball with them or push them on the swing). Sometimes I'll work with one child on telling time, dictating sentences or reading. Many times we'll just talk about other things and I can listen to them. Often in the

lunchroom the kids will come up to me to just talk. Once I brought my dominoes to school so we could play.

Some of the things I see the kids learning about how to be better human beings:

- This week a speaker came to talk about what's good for your body and what's bad – alcohol, medicine, cigarettes, sprays, magic marker, paints, cleaning solutions.
- When it's time to leave the classroom, you're supposed to line up – no talking – no pushing in line – walk quietly. But sometimes they don't listen, it's still noisy.
- Say "No" if someone is picking at you – say "Leave me alone" and walk away, because if that person keeps on and you respond, then you'll both be in trouble.
- If you go to the teacher, she'll ask "What's the problem? Let's get it solved."

When some kids don't sit still or listen in music, they are sent to sit a "time out" away from the group (in the same room, but not with the other children). I go with them to this class and I'm going to move around and start tapping the shoulder of the kids that aren't listening.

I try to set a good example – by just being there, sitting quietly, being calm and paying attention to what's going on.

When I was in school the grade school classrooms had no TV, no computers, no music sessions, no daily snacks and there was no freedom to just get up and walk around. I didn't have a "Big Brother" or mentor outside the home to help me, so that's why I want to help these kids.

I know I can't help all the kids, but it makes me feel good to know I'm doing something to help some of them.

2. THE RACE FOR MY EDUCATION

Chris Edwards (Winner)

What would you do if you never had a prom or never even had the chance to play sports? What would you do if you never had the opportunity to attend school at all as a child? This is my story of how my education has been the race of my life. And how I got a late start, also the obstacles I had to run toward, and how I am headed for the finish line.

Because of serious family problems I was never sent to school as a child. After sixteen long years of being kept a secret, I went to my Youth Pastor. I told him the situation. After he did much research, he said my best option was a G.E.D. enrollment at Blue Ridge Community College. It was a late start, but it was a start.

It was time to face my obstacles head on. I enrolled in the G.E.D. program at B.R.C.C. and took a placement test. Since I never had any kind of schooling, the test scores were low. Somehow, I had about a third grade reading level. I guess I picked it up somewhere along the way. Because I had so much catching up to do, I was recommended to the Blue Ridge Literacy Council.

The council found me a great tutor. After working together for about a year, I was ready for my first G.E.D.E. test. It was the reading test; it was at about a tenth grade level. I passed the test! Needless to say, I improved about seven grade levels in a year's time. Since then, I've taken and passed two more tests with above average scores. I am now preparing for the writing test. I know the next and final test, which is math, will be the most difficult, but it won't stop me from crossing the finish line.

Even though I got a late start and had many obstacles to face, I'm finishing the race. The average time for those who enroll at the literacy council to obtain the G.E.D. is about eight years. With God's help, I will have done it in about three years.

3. RACE FOR GOLD

Barbara Taylor (Winner)

When I was young, I hated school because I could not learn to read, no matter how hard I tried. God gave me sense to know I wasn't stupid. Instead of getting all bent out of shape about learning to read, I put it on the back burner. I have had an interesting life; being sure I never set myself up to be in a position where I had to read.

I went through life having my own viewpoints and feelings about things because I couldn't read anyone else's viewpoints. My mother raised me in a manner to know right from wrong.

Because there is a stigma attached to not being able to read, I had to escape in order to respect myself and not be embarrassed or belittled. So I ran – I ran all the way across our country. Fortunately, I had someone who was willing to go with me.

I went to the Sierra Mountains in California and learned from old miners on the river how to find gold. I had the gift of gab and could communicate with anyone, so I learned how to exist and take care of myself outside of

normal society – without reading. I surrounded myself with God’s country – beautiful mountains, clear rivers, beautiful skies with eagles flying overhead.

Life was hard but I loved it. When you have gold fever, gold is on your brain. It is all you think about.

Winters were cold and especially hard and when I discovered I had cancer, I had to move into town; back into society.

While I was recuperating, I needed something to do, and always remembering that I wanted to read, I heard on the radio about a literacy program. I went to the library in Quincy and met two lovely ladies who cared and wanted to help. Unfortunately, after four or five months, circumstances prevented me from staying in California and I returned to my home in North Carolina.

After about a year of getting settled here, I went to Housing to get help and saw a poster for Blue Ridge Literacy. Here I am, back at the beginning, finally learning to read.

I have no regrets about trying to escape the fact I could not read. I saw and felt things I could have

read about, but I am sure I would not have looked at it the same way.

I have had all kinds of adventures in my life. It seems I lived a story, but it was a story I could not read.

4. A HARD LESSON

Helen Warner (Winner)

The most embarrassing time was when I went to the filling station and had \$20 in my purse, but I put it someplace. Naturally, I filled the tank and couldn’t find the \$20.

I was living about 5 minutes from the station, so I asked them to trust me. They had me sign an affidavit saying how much the gas was and stating I had 24 hours to get the money back to them before they called the police!

I went to my boss and borrowed money to pay for the gas, rushed back to the station and gave them the money. She tore the paper 4 ways and handed it back to me.

Once I got home and had a clearer mind, I looked through my purse and found it caught between two papers.

What I learned was: have a clearer head and don’t panic. I also make sure I put the money so I know where it’s at before I pump my gas.



If Kurt Russell and Kevin Costner can help BRLC, so can you! *Every Tutor Should Be A Recruiter.*

Kurt Russell and Kevin Costner (shown above) are just two of the celebrities who participated in the BMW Charity Pro-Am at The Cliffs April 29 – May 2. For the second year BRLC was chosen as a beneficiary of this great tournament.

WHAT ABOUT HOMEWORK?

Adapted from Greater Pittsburgh Literacy Council

The primary goal of our adult learners is to improve language, reading and writing in order to meet their needs. We know the more we use a new skill, the better we become. Yet many have difficulty finding time in their busy schedules for homework. If your student falls into this category, consider the following:

1. Talk about the importance of homework and practice. Share personal stories of how something difficult and stressful became easier with a little practice and determination.
2. Make sure your student leaves class understanding exactly what the assignment is. Create a checklist for his assignment in the last part of every lesson. Review it together.
3. Can he do his homework with no help from others? Never assign homework unless you're sure your student can do it. Homework should reinforce what has been learned - not introduce a new skill or one your student is struggling with.
4. Given your student's schedule, does he have enough time to do homework? You may need to reduce the amount you assign. A little time spent on homework is better than none.
5. Talk about learning styles. What are the factors that affect the student's ability to concentrate on homework? Explain to him that people learn in different ways, that it is okay to "get comfortable" to do homework. Talk with the student about times that would be best to study.
 - Is he a "day person" or a "night person"?
 - Does he like to study alone, or with someone else?
 - Must it be totally quiet or does he like some background music or noise when reading or writing?
 - What about light and temperature? What room does he prefer?
 - Does he feel comfortable at a table, desk, chair, or sofa?
 - Would eating or drinking something while studying help?
 - Is your student a visual, auditory, kinesthetic or tactile learner? Try to include all these modalities in your lessons and in the homework you assign.
6. Always review homework assignments at the next class. You want to reinforce the importance of practice and congratulate his efforts.
7. Talk with your student about the article *Study Hints* that appears on page 2. Would these things work for him, what else would work?
8. Remember the purpose of homework and practice is to build success and retention, not to induce frustration or boredom. Give your student choices of assignments, when possible.

If you make doing homework rewarding, successful, and fun, most students will see how it helps them to accomplish their personal goals.

STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT

Soraya Bustos, Bobbie Auld, Voyager 1; **Soraya Bustos**, Joe Taylor, LifePrints Literacy; and LifePrints 1; **Justina Roman Castellanos**, Barbara Elmore, Laubach Way To English 1; **Sergio Cruz**, Jim White, Voyager 3; **Clifford DeHond**, Lora Lytle, Plant Life; **Raymond Garcia**, Steve Smith, Voyager 4; **Marite Davila Gomez**, Bev Kelley, Voyager 2; **Angelica Gonzalez**, Evelyn Bowman, Voyager Foundation; **Bopha Holden**, Lillis Brackett, Voyager Foundation; **Jose Luis Ramos Lara**, Linda Nordstrom, LifePrints Literacy; **Maria Lefeber**, Anita Penner, Voyager 8; **Anonymous**, Jack Fitzgerald, Wilson 3; **Santiago Zamudio Morales**, Hans Iwen, Voyager 5; **David Nava**, Polly Heaton, Voyager 5; **Hernan Ortega**, B.J. Klein, Challenger 3; **Aida Ortiz**, B.J. Klein, Laubach Way To English 2; **Sonya Osteen**, Jan Guess, Voyager 6; **Sonya Osteen**, Ron Anderson, Jan Guess, Passed GED; **Lorenzo Oviedo**, David Chapin, Voyager 1; **Teresa Pantaleon**, Joyce Roth, Voyager 1; **Pedro Poblete**, Joe Taylor, LifePrints Literacy; and LifePrints 1; **Leticia Rodriguez**, Nancy Underwood, LifePrints Literacy; **Martina Rodriguez**, Dottie Sheehan, U.S. Citizen; **Raquel Orihuela Roque**, Wilma Irwin, Voyager Foundation; **Esperanza Urbina**, Katherine Price, Laubach Way To English 2; **Candice Washington**, Lois Dawson, Voyager 5

Special Congratulations to **Sonya Osteen** for finishing her GED!

ILP CALLS ARE COMING JULY 1 - START REVIEWING NOW!

Blue Ridge Literacy Calendar

JUNE				
8	Tuesday	Tutor Network	1:00	BRLC
10	Thursday	Tutor Orientation	6:00 – 7:30	BRLC
15,17,22,24	Tues/Thurs	Tutor Training	6:00 – 9:00	President’s Dining Rm.
21	Monday	Board of Directors Mtg.	5:30 – 7:00	President’s Dining Rm.
28	Monday	BRLC Golf Tournament	12:00	Kenmure Country Club
JULY				
1	Thursday	Start of New Fiscal Year		
5	Monday	Independence Day observance – office closed		
13	Tuesday	No Tutor Network		
15	Thursday	Tutor Orientation	6:00 – 7:30	BRLC
21 - 23	Wed - Fri	Basic Skills Conference		Winston-Salem, NC
26	Monday	Board of Directors Mtg.	5:30 - 7:00	President’s Dining Rm.
AUGUST				
7	Saturday	Annual Meeting	10:00	Kaplan Auditorium/ Hend County Public library
10	Tuesday	No Tutor Network		
12	Thursday	<u>Tutor Orientation</u>	6:00 – 7:30	BRLC
17,19,24,26	Tues/Thurs	<u>Tutor Training</u>	6:00 – 9:00	President’s Dining Rm
23	Monday	Board of Directors Mtg.	5:30 - 7:00	President’s Dining Rm.
SEPTEMBER				
3 –5	Fri - Sun	BRLC Apple Festival Booth		
6	Monday	Labor Day – Office closed		
9	Thursday	Tutor Orientation	6:00 – 7:30	BRLC
14	Tuesday	Tutor Network	1:00	BRLC
18,25	Saturday	Tutor Training	9:00 am – 3:30	President’s Dining Rm
19	Sunday	Student/Volunteer Picnic	4:00 – 7:00	BRCC Picnic Shelter
27	Monday	Board of Directors Mtg.	5:30 – 7:00	President’s Dining Rm.
OCTOBER				
12	Tuesday	Tutor Network	1:00	BRLC
14	Thursday	Tutor Orientation	3:00 – 4:30	BRLC
19,21,26,28	Tues/Thurs	Tutor Training	1:00 – 4:00	President’s Dining Rm
25	Monday	Board of Directors Mtg.	5:30 – 7:00	President’s Dining Rm.
NOVEMBER				
3	Wednesday	Tutor Orientation	3:00 – 4:30	BRLC
8,10,15,17	Mon/Wed	Tutor Training	1:00 – 4:00	To be determined
9	Tuesday	Tutor Network	1:00	BRLC
11	Thursday	Veterans Day – office closed		
22	Monday	Board of Directors Mtg.	5:30 - 7:00	President’s Dining Rm.
25, 26	Thurs & Fri	Thanksgiving holiday – office closed		
DECEMBER				
2	Thursday	Tutor Orientation	3:00 – 4:30	BRLC
10	Friday	BRLC Holiday Open House	1:30 ...	BRLC
14	Tuesday	No Tutor Network		
23, 24 & 27	Thurs, Friday, Monday	<u>Christmas Holiday observance – office closed</u>		
31	Friday	New Year’s Day observance – office closed		

BECOMING A CITIZEN

Stan Leon

It was my great pleasure to help my student Gregorio Aguillon prepare for his American citizenship test. He passed with ease, and then did me the great honor of asking if I would like to be present when he took the oath of allegiance at the Federal Building in Charlotte on October 21. Of course I was delighted.

So, at 6:30 AM on that bright and sunny October day Gregorio and his wife, Rogelia, picked me up at my home and we arrived in Charlotte in plenty of time for the 10 AM ceremony. After a rigorous security screening we were able to enter the Federal Building and find seats among the nearly 200 people from all parts of the globe who were there to become citizens, or to watch as friends and/or family became citizens.

The 75 prospective citizens were called up to seats in a roped-off special section and following brief remarks by an Immigration Department officer and a rousing patriotic film, the main program began. Highlights included a soft-spoken, African woman who told the audience why she became a citizen, and a Muslim gentleman who led everyone in reciting the Pledge of Allegiance.

The experience was both emotional and quite moving. It reminded me how fortunate we are to live in freedom in America.

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JULY 1

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